

Message Text

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60

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SY-05 USSS-00 MCT-01 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /063 W

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R 021300Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9398

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 5876

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, SY

SUBJECT: BOMB EXPLODES NEAR RESIDENCE OF RIF'AT AL-ASAD

1. EMBOFF HAS LEARNED FROM HUNGARIAN EMBOFF THAT BOMB EXPLODED ON STREET IN FRONT OF RESIDENCE BELONGING TO LT COL RIF'AT AL-ASAD, BROTHER OF PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER OF DEFENSE COMPANIES, NIGHT OF AUGUST 31. SOURCE, WHO LIVES ACROSS STREET FROM RIF'AT, STATED LARGE NUMBER OF SECURITY PERSONNEL KEPT EVERYONE LIVING ALONG STREET--INCLUDING HOUSEGUESTS--INSIDE THEIR HOMES UNTIL EARLY HOURS OF SEPTEMBER 1 WHILE THEY CONDUCTED INVESTIGATION OF INCIDENT.

2. FOLLOWING NIGHT, SEPTEMBER 2, EMBOFFS HEARD TWO EXPLOSIONS SHORTLY AFTER MIDNIGHT, BUT WE DO NOT YET HAVE ANY DETAILS.

3. SYRIAN CONTACT WAS RECENTLY TOLD BY VETERAN BAATHIST THAT EXPLOSIVE DEVICE DESTROYED PART OF LATAKIA GOVERNORATE BUILDING PRIOR TO SCHEDULED VISIT BY PRESIDENT ASAD TO
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THAT LOCATION IN EARLY AUGUST. ACCORDING TO BAATHIST,

THERE WERE FEW OR NO CASUALTIES BUT DAMAGE STILL
VISIBLE AT BUILDING. EXPLOSION TOOK PLACE BEFORE ASAD
ARRIVED FOR HIS MEETING WITH OFFICIALS THERE.

4. COMMENT: INFORMATION ABOUT EXPLOSION IN LATAKIA CONFIRMS IRAQI
BROADCAST OF INCIDENT. CONCERNING RIF'AT, HE REPORTEDLY
MAINTAINS SEVERAL RESIDENCES IN DAMASCUS AREA AND SOURCE
UNCERTAIN WHETHER RIF'AT AT THIS PARTICULAR VILLA WHEN
BOMB EXPLODED. THESE INCIDENTS WILL NO DOUBT SERVE AS
WARNING, IF ONE STILL NEEDED, THAT TOP SARG LEADERS NOT
IMMUNE TO THREATS TO THEIR PERSONAL SAFETY. MOREOVER,
IT NOW APPEARS CLEAR THAT SARG CLAIMS TO HAVE ROUNDED UP
PERPETRATORS OF AUGUST BOMBING INCIDENTS ARE AT BEST
INCOMPLETE.
PELLETREAU

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